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School Committee Minutes 11-25-2003

The Arlington School Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, November 25, 2003
7:30 PM

Present: Suzanne Owayda, Chair
Paul Schlichtman, Vice-Chair
Barbara Goodman
Jeff Thielman
Martin Thrope

Superintendent: Kay Donovan
Asst. Supt. Joanne Gurry
Chief Financial Officer: Rob Addelson
Special Education Director: Marilyn Bisbicos

Absent: Joani LaMachia, Sue Sheffler

Call to order: 7:30 PM

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was
Voted to enter executive session for a grievance hearing and to complete the agenda on return to open session.
Roll Call: Unanimous

EXECUTIVE SESSION - 7:30 – 8:45 PM

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

MCAS SCHEDULE

Supt. Donovan reviewed a request from AHS principal Steve Woodcock relative to a time change during MCAS testing for 10th grade students. Grade 10 students would arrive at the normal time to begin testing for the first four periods of the day on March 30, May 18, 19, 20, 21. The remainder of the students would arrive at the beginning of period four (11:06 am); the schedule would rotate so that no particular period would incur the bulk of the missed time. Mrs. Donovan noted that many other school systems have adopted the staggered schedule and supports the request.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously
Voted the adoption of the requested time schedule for MCAS testing on March 30, May 18, 19, 20, and 21, 2004.

REPORT ON MASC CONFERENCE

Mr. Schlichtman reported on the MASC conference and reviewed the resolutions passed.

Mr. Schlichtman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrope that the Arlington School Committee reaffirm the vote of MASC (and that of the Cambridge School Committee and City Council) to ask state legislators to support a moratorium of charter schools.

The Committee requested more time and information on how a charter school in Cambridge would impact Arlington.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was unanimously Voted to postpone action until such time as the Superintendent obtains more information on the impact of Cambridge Charter schools in Arlington.

RENTAL FEE PROPOSAL

Supt. Donovan presented the suggested fee schedule for the use of school facilities. The Superintendent requested that the School Committee take the proposal under consideration until the next meeting and to discuss it when the full committee is present. The Committee recommended that if passed the new rates would be applicable to new requests after the first of the year and that existing agreements would be honored until next September when the new rates would be effective.

SCHOOL CAPACITY DISCUSSION

The Superintendent reviewed a chart on school capacity at the seven elementary schools. Using the guideline of 20 students in grades K-2 and 23 students in grades 3-5 Mrs. Donovan noted that the result showed the need for redistricting but did not reduce the numbers of classrooms needed.

Supt. Donovan will give the chart to the Community Relations Subcommittee for their consideration. The Supt. also emphasized that the school committee must decide on the number of schools. If a school is closed there will be no space for growth and specialists. She is aware that there is pressure to close a school but the savings in doing so would be minimal. Committee members requested from the administration:

- .. A cost analysis of what it costs to educate students in the BIP program currently housed in Arlington.
- .. A cost analysis of what it would cost to educate those same students in outside placement.
- .. A presentation on the costs/benefits of closing a school/s using different scenarios on class size.

CAPITAL BUDGET

CFO Rob Addelson presented the preliminary schedule of the proposed FY05-FY09 Capital Plan. The schedule includes projects that were requested in last year's capital plan; no new projects have been added. Final recommendations for the FY05-FY09 Capital Plan will be submitted to the School Committee in December.

COMMITTEE VOTES

.. Warrant Approval –

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was unanimously Voted to approve warrant # 04061 in the amount of \$257,596.70. (Mr. Schlichtman abstained on the line item payment to MASC).

.. Memorandum of Understanding

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was Voted that Chair and Superintendent be directed to sign the Memorandum of Understanding regarding private fundraising between the Arlington School Committee and the ACE Families Coalition during the 2003-2004 academic year.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was Voted to enter executive session to discuss a grievance hearing and negotiations with no further business to be conducted upon return to open session except to adjourn. Roll Call: Unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – 10:00 – 10:50 PM

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously Voted to adjourn @ 10:50 PM.